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ENEX 400.01: Professional Editing

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The University Of Montana

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BRENNER
ENEX 400.01

SYLLABUS FOR ENGLISH 400: PROFESSIONAL EDITING

Semester: Fall, 2000 Instructor: Gerry Brenner Course Request Number: 73472 Room: LA 244

Office: LA 126 Office Hours: Mon, Wed, Fri, 12-2; Fri 3-4:30; and by arrangement.

Phones: 243-4462 (UM), 549-4541 (Home, not after 9 p.m., thank you) Email: koala2@selway.umd.edu

Required Textbooks:

Brooks, Pinson & Wilson: *Working with Words: A Concise Handbook for Media Writers and Editors*, 3rd.ed. (St. Martin's)

Brenner: *Brenner's Madding Workbook* (Campus Quick Copy Faculty Pack)

Optional Textbooks:

The New York Public Library Writer's Guide to Style and Usage (HarperCollins)

The Chicago Manual of Style 14th ed. (U Chicago P)

Stainton, *The Fine Art of Copyediting* (Columbia UP)

Sharpe and Gunther, *Editing Fact and Fiction: A Concise Guide to Book Editing* (Cambridge UP)

Goldstein, ed., *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual* (Spiral-bound 32nd ed.) (The Associated Press)

Hale, *Sin and Syntax: How to Craft Wickedly Effective Prose* (Broadway Books)

Expected Companions, Tools, and Accessories:

Dictionary: *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th edition (Merriam-Webster)

Usage handbook: e.g., Morris and Morris, *Harper Dictionary of Contemporary Usage* (Harper & Row), Follet, *Modern American Usage: A Guide* (Hill and Wang) or Bremner, *Words on Words: A Dictionary for Writers and Others Who Care About Words* (Columbia UP)

Typewriter or personal computer.

UM Catalog Course Description: "Intensive training in advanced skills of revising different kinds of prose to give them style, shape, and clarity and to prepare for such editing assignments as [news]releases, articles, grant proposals, manuals, impact statements, technical and non-technical reports."

Course-Centered Objectives:

To maintain a paced regimen of editing and revising expository writing, much of it published! and work-world;

To vary assignments from punctuation- and sentence-level touching-up to article-length, major overhauling; from individual to "group" revisions;

To furnish stylistic, rhetorical, formatting, and structural editing tools, tips, conventions, dicta, and strategies, some essential, some practical, some merely to buffalo a client or a balky language-offender;

To provide experience in a broad range of editing and writer-editor assignments: e.g., copyediting for a book publisher; editing and revising technical, bureaucratic, academic, and jargon-laden writing; formatting prose-strung texts into visibly readable communications; converting boring texts into readable brochures; writing reader-based prose; composing news releases; ghost-writing for an ineffective "writer"; and

To bring in "real-world" editors, writers, copyeditors, copywriters, and professional colleagues to share experience, expertise, anecdotes, and caveats.

Student-Centered Objectives:

To foster executive-level editing;

To facilitate self-instruction by comparing and questioning classmates' work, randomly returned after every assignment;

To instill disciplined editing habits and valorize one usually denigrated, editorial *sine qua non*, anal-retentiveness;

- To instigate portfolio thinking, assembling "before-and-after" work presentable to a prospective employer;
- To nurture the other *sine qua non* of good writers and editors: self-induced paranoia; and
- To prepare for the follow-up course, ENEX 401, Editing Internship, an individually tailored, semester-long assignment to agencies, publishers, businesses, offices, magazine editors, near and far.

Attendance Policy: You win a Drop or an F grade with your third (3rd) unexcused absence; repeated tardiness wins the same reward. I leave to you the responsibility of notifying me of the reasons for your absences; but to me I leave the decision of whether to excuse an absence. Scheduling conflicts with other classes, a job, or pre-existing situations do not excuse absences; unanticipated health problems, family emergencies, and occasional transportation difficulties do.

Guests: During the term I'll bring in guests to share their expertise with you. Contingencies permitting, they'll include Kathleen Ort, editor, Mountain Press; Jay Nichols, editor, Falcon Press; JoAnn Hoven, Public Information Coordinator, St. Patrick Hospital; Deborah Richie Oberbillig, Freelance Interpretive Specialist; Jenni Mays York, freelance technical writer/editor; Joan Melcher, editor, *The Montanan*; Shannon Jahrig, editor, *Montana Business Quarterly*; Deborah Clow, Associate Editor, *Northern Lights*; Terry Brenner, writer/editor, University Relations; and Patrick Hutchins, free-lance advertising copy-writer, formerly Spiker Communications, or Jim Keener, copy-writer for Tutskey Group.

Disabilities: If you are a student with disabilities, please notify me of your status—and provide documentation—by no later than the end of the second week. I'll gladly negotiate with you to make necessary accommodations in the requirements, should they be necessary.

Calendar:

Turn in all assignments at the beginning of class. I'll grade down late work, and it'll jeopardize your chances of getting consent to enroll in the follow-up course, Editing Internship.

For all assignments that specify "turn in," TYPE and DOUBLE SPACE (excepting the copy-editing exercise, Exercise 1);

For all assignments that specify "do," make corrections on your *BMW* pages or make notes and revisions on a separate sheet of paper and bring to class, where we'll go over them *viva voce*.)

Except for the Group-Editing and final Ghosting Assignment, you may take a bye on one assignment after Week 6.

For all assignments, your job is to fulfill its now-dead author's testamentary injunction to you, his or her executor: "Make it readable."

Week 1:

Sept 6 Orientation and Diagnostic Quiz.

Week 2:

- Sept 11 Thumb Brooks, Pinson & Wilson. If you've bought it, thumb Goldstein and any of the other optional texts. Thumb Brenner. ~~Thumb your nose at . . .~~ Turn in a single-spaced, one-page autobiographical profile with enough copies for each classmate and three for me.
- 13 Read Brooks, Pinson & Wilson, "Voice," pp. 34-36, "Being Concise," pp. 95-98, and "What to Tighten A-Z, pp. 98-125. Turn in Road Test 1, *BMW*, p. 32.

Week 3:

- Sept 18 Read Guide 1, *BMW*, p.67. Hand in your manually corrected (*i.e.*, with a pen or No. 2 pencil) Exercise 1, *BMW*, on the copy I'll hand out in class. Do Exercises 2 & 3, *BMW*.

- 20 Read Brooks, Pinson & Wilson, "Hyphenation as a Spelling Problem," pp. 242-60. Read Guide 2, *BMW*, p. 69. Turn in Exercise 4, *BMW*. Guest.

Week 4:

- Sept 25 Read Guide 3, "Jet Propulsion Laboratory's *The Levels of Edit*," *BMW*, pp. 70-73. Turn in Road Test 2, *BMW*, p. 33.
- 27 Read Brooks, Pinson & Wilson, Chapter 9: "Muddled Language," pp. 126-82. Do Exercise 5 and turn in Exercise 6, *BMW*.

Week 5:

- Oct 2 Read Brooks, Pinson & Wilson, Ch. 9, "Sexism, Racism and Other '-isms'," pp. 183-209. Turn in Exercise 7, *BMW*. Guest.
- 4 Read Guide 4, "Checklist for Reader-Based Editing—*a la* Linda Flower," *BMW*, pp. 74-77. Do Road Test 3, *BMW*, p. 35, turning in only three different one-sentence forecasts you'd use, were you to revise the entire piece.

Week 6:

- Oct 9 Turn in Road Test 4, *BMW*, p. 36, applying Linda Flower's guidelines for reader-based prose.
- Oct 11 Read Brooks, Pinson & Wilson, Appendix D, "A Summary of Common Mistakes," pp. 272-77. Do Exercise 8 and turn in Road Test 5, *BMW*, p. 37.

Week 7:

- Oct 16 Turn in Exercise 9, *BMW*. Guest.
- 18 Turn in Road Test 7, *BMW*, p. 39, formatted for visibility.

Week 8:

- Oct 23 Turn in five copies of your revision of Road Test 8, a brochure of "Here Come the Mules," *BMW*, p. 41.
- 25 Turn in five copies of your revision of either Road Test 9 or 10, *BMW*, pp. 42, 44.

Week 9:

- Oct 30 Do Exercise 10, *BMW* and turn in Exercise 11, *BMW*. Guest.
- Nov 1 Do Exercise 12 and turn in either Exercise 13 or 14, *BMW*.

Week 10:

- Nov 6 Read Brooks, Pinson & Wilson, "Readability Formulas as Measures of Clarity," p. 90. Read Guide 5, "Readability Formulas," *BMW*, p. 77. Do exercise 15, *BMW*. Read Guide 6, "Tibbett's 'Unit Rule' for Readable Writing," *BMW*, p. 78-79. Turn in a unit-rule schematic of the complete text of Exercise 15, *BMW*. Bring to class a sample of *your own* expository writing: *e.g.*, letter, essay, article, clipping, chapter from your most recent book. Read the four Galley Works 2-5 and be ready to cast your lot with one article, which you'll ghost in a variant "group-editing" project, according to an assignment I'll provide then.

- 8 Read all the materials under Guide 7, "The Warnier-Orr-Walton Diagram (WOWD), *BMW*, pp. 80-83. Read Road Test 11. **Turn in a partial, hand-written** Warnier-Orr-Walton Diagram (WOWD) [only the two left columns] of the existing document (*i.e.*, Road Test 11) and **two partial, hand-written** WOWDs (again only the two left columns) of how you'd rework it for two different purposes or audiences—to make two different things happen; for these sketched revisions, exercise executive-level editing.
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Week 11:

- Nov 13 **Hand in** three partial, **hand-written** WOWDs [again, only the two left columns] of Road Test 12 or 13, one of the original (Before) and two of how you'd redesign the document (After).
15 Read Guide 9, "Formula Leads for Feature Writing," *BMW*. Do Exercise 16. **Turn in** Galley Work 1, "Ethical Issues in Editing Scholarly Journals," revised and formatted as an interview or a Question-and-Answer document.
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Week 12:

- Nov 20 **Turn in** your revised Galley Work, including one copy for each classmate in your group and two for me.
22 **Enjoy Thanksgiving Holidays**
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Week 13:

- Nov 27 Read Guide 8, "Brenner's Formula for Writing a Critique," *BMW*, 84-88. **Turn in** two copies of a two-page critique of an assigned classmate's revision of the Galley Work you, too, revised, the original for the author, the copy for me. For your critique use a memorandum format, addressing it to me, Carolyn Thweathour, Editor-in-Chief, *Bestest Magazine*, advising me on the revised essay's publishability in our "average-readers-only" 'zine.
29 Read Brooks, Pinson & Wilson, Ch. 11, "Writing News for Broadcast, Writing News for Print," pp. 210-34. Read Guide 10, "News-Release Guidelines," *BMW*, p. 90. Guest.
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Week 14:

- Dec 4 **Turn in** Exercise 17. Read "Editing Internships: An Exhortation for Launching," *BMW*, 94-98.
6 **Turn in** Road Test 14, *BMW*, p. 50.
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Week 15:

- Dec 11 **Turn in** Road Test 15, *BMW*, p. 51.
13 Read Guide 11, "Writing Advertising Headlines," *BMW*, pp. 91-92. Guest. **Turn in** your request for editing internships.
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Week 16:

- Dec 19 **Turn in** final project: Ghost two versions of a botched but published text, magazine-article length, one version for the audience the magazine or text was trying to reach, one version for an audience of your choosing. Bring along a SASE, if you wish me to mail you your final project and grade.